

## Writing DIVISION (ANALYSIS) and PROCESS Essays

### I. What is an Essay?

- A. An essay is an OPINION backed up with FACTS.

*"An essay should express the ideas, opinions or belief of the writer about one particular subject." ~ Andrew Pudewa*

*"Opinion: A belief not based on absolute certainty or positive knowledge but on what seems true, valid, or probable to one's own mind; what one thinks; judgment." ~ Lucile Vaughan Payne*

- B. The opinion is stated in one sentence, the THESIS

*The thesis is your opinion summarized in one arguable statement.  
~ Lucile Vaughan Payne*

#### 1. Characteristics of a successful thesis:

Potentially interesting to audience.  
Communicates a clear position  
Limits topic  
Arguable  
Tries to persuade, change, or motivate readers

#### 2. How to find a Thesis:

Take inventory of subjects that you know something about, and choose one.

Jot down some things that you know about the subject.

Ask yourself questions about the things that you know about the subject.

Keep asking questions until you find one that is truly interesting and about which people might disagree.

Change the question to a statement of your opinion.

State three reasons or more reasons you hold this opinion.

C. How long should an essay be?

*The reason the five-paragraph theme exists at all is that it is a highly simplified model of logical analysis: identify a topic; break the topic into its component parts; examine each part in turn; and then pull the whole thing back together into a unified whole. It is only bad when the oversimplified model becomes the end rather than the means... We should not try to prevent teachers from using this model with beginning writers. On the other hand, students do need to move beyond this formulaic, limited model, and they certainly should not be shackled to the five-paragraph theme by the time they get to college.~ Tina Blue, English Professor*

<http://essayisay.homestead.com/fiveparagraphs.html>

II. Division Essay

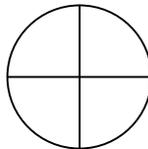
**Key Concept:** Analyzing a whole by breaking it into its component parts or stages

A. Two primary purposes: sorting and explaining

1. Does NOT break something into different types of the same thing

Does NOT break down a subject into merely a list of parts

2. DOES divide the component parts or stages of ONE subject (concrete or abstract) AND shows how these parts work together to create the whole



a. The EASY Part: DIVIDE

Layers of the earth:

Medical specialties:

Theaters of WWII:

Stages of marriage:

Positions of a sports team:

Plot stages of a story:

b. The HARD Part: EXPLAIN the MEANING BEHIND THE DIVISIONS

What is the meaning or purpose of the division?

Example: Grocery store

B. How to write a Division Essay (See Essay Planner)

1. Decide on subject to be analyzed.

2. Divide the subject into parts/stages.

Distinct

Not superficial

Broad

3. Determine the purpose and thesis

Working/Academic thesis: list the parts/stages

Example: A typical homeschool day is composed of school work, spiritual training, household tasks, extracurricular activities, and human relations.

Ask questions: What is my opinion about what these parts/stages mean?  
Why do I believe this?

Thesis statement: express opinion about meaning of parts/stages

Example: A comprehensive homeschool experience prepares a student for life academically, emotionally, practically, socially and spiritually.

4. Decide how each part supports the purpose of the essay.

5. Arrange the parts into a logical order.

Spatial

Temporal

Importance

Interest

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6. Use a variety of writing techniques to detail each part, using one or more paragraphs for each part. (Some parts may need to be subdivided.)

Description  
Narration  
Exemplification  
Comparison

7. Introduction should start broadly and end with the thesis.

8. Conclusion should emphasize the meaning/purpose of the essay.

### III. Process Analysis Essays

**Key Concept:** Explain, prove and/or evaluate a process

#### A. A combination of the Division Essay + Narrative Essay

1. Divides a process into phases, then steps.
2. Narrates the steps in sequence, usually in chronological order, *except*
3. Steps should be concrete and repeatable, not abstract.
4. Uses transitional words and expressions of time and space to help the reader understand the sequence.

#### B. How to write a Process Essay (See Essay Planner)

1. Decide on process to be analyzed.
2. Divide the process into stages and each stage into steps.

Distinct  
Not abstract

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3. Detailed enough so the reader can repeat them  
Determine the purpose and thesis

Working/Academic thesis: list the parts/stages

Example: Ministering to visitors in a youth group involves three steps: preparing, welcoming and enfolding

Ask questions: What is my opinion about what these parts/stages mean?  
Why do I believe this?

Full thesis statement: express opinion about meaning of parts/stages

Example: If a youth group wants to fulfill its purpose of building up the Body of Christ, members have to be intentional about reaching out to visitors and newcomers.

4. Decide how each stage/step supports to the purpose of the process.
5. Arrange the stages/steps in chronological order.
6. Use transitional words and expressions of time and space
7. Use specific details to clarify each step.

Description  
Examples  
Comparison

8. Introduction could include:

Overview of the process  
When or where the process occurs  
Why it is useful, interesting or important  
Essential background information.

9. Conclusion should emphasize:

Results  
Summary of stages

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Significance or usefulness of process

DIVISION and PROCESS ESSAY PLANNER

Introduction Notes

1. "Funnel" (see p. 23) begins with Decoration 2. Introduces the subject or process you are going to divide into parts or stages in your Body.  
 3. Interesting background information, overview of process, where/when it occurs, why it is interesting, useful or important

4. Ends with Thesis:

Part 1:

- Topic sentence uses Transition word AND reflects 2-3 Key Words from last sentence of Intro
- 3 description details
- Explanation/Illustration
- Concrete steps for process

Clincher bridges to next topic

Part 2:

- Topic sentence uses Transition AND reflects 2-3 Key Words from last sentence of Body p. 1.
- 3 description details
- Explanation/Illustration
- Concrete steps for process

Clincher bridges to next topic

Part 3:

- Topic sentence uses Transition word AND reflects 2-3 Key Words from last sentence of Body p. 2.
- 3 description details
- Explanation/Illustration
- Concrete steps for process

Clincher bridges to next topic

Part 4:

- Topic sentence uses Transition word AND reflects 2-3 Key Words from last sentence of Body p. 3
- 3 description details
- Explanation/Illustration
- Concrete steps for process

Clincher bridges to next paragraph

Conclusion Notes

1. Transition from previous paragraph strongly. 5. last sentence used in title

2. Restate thesis

3. Most Important? (so what?)

4. Use decoration or one of the Conclusion ideas to end

# Division or Process Essay

\_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ points = \_\_\_\_\_ %

I II III IV (V) (VI) Conc.

<b>CONTENT/STRUCTURE</b>							
At least 5 paragraphs- Intro, 3 or more body paragraphs and Conclusion.	6						
Intro starts with attention-grabber.	3						
The last sentence of Intro states thesis.	3						
Body paragraphs describe the part or stage using description, example/illustration and/or comparison.		3	3	3	3	3	
FOR PROCESS ESSAYS: Process steps are concrete, repeatable, and in chronological order		3	3	3	3	3	
All body paragraphs have topic/clinchers.		3	3	3	3	3	
Conclusion explains WHY this subject is important/significant.							3
DO NOT use "I think" or "in my opinion". State it as a fact!							3
Use at least 3 descriptive details for each paragraph.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Use transition words/Key Words to connect each paragraph to the one before it.		3	3	3	3	3	3
<b>GENERAL:</b>							
Title from 2-3 strong Key Words from last sentence of Conclusion.	3						
Each paragraph's KWO follows "Rules."	6						
Composition is double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-pt. serif font, white paper	6						
Dress-ups underlined & sentence types numbered in <b>BOLD</b> (1 of each), Decs in italics	6						
Title is underlined with "By" and name below it.	3						
All banned/weak verbs/adjectives eliminated/replaced.	6						

## STYLE

<b>DRESS-UPS: At least 1 of each in every paragraph</b>	I	II	III	IV	(V)	(VI)	Conc.
"ly" word (At least 1 paragraph <b>Dual</b> -ly; see Handbook, Advanced Dress-ups)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
who/which (At least 1 invisible who/which; see Handbook, Advanced Dress-ups)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
strong verb (At least 1 paragraph has <b>Dual</b> strong verbs; see Handbook, Advanced Dress-ups)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
quality adjective (At least 1 paragraph has <b>Dual</b> quality adj.; see Handbook, Advanced Dress-ups)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
"www.asia.wub" clause	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
At least 1 paragraph has an adj. OR adv. "Teeter-Totter"	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

<b>SENTENCE TYPES: At least 1 of each in every paragraph</b>	I	II	III	IV	V	IV	V
① Subject opener	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
② Prepositional opener	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
③ "ly" Adverb opener	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
④ "-ing"/"-ed" opener (requires a comma) At least 1 "invisible -ing"	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
⑤ "www.asia.wub" adverbial clause opener	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
⑥ VSS (Very Short Sentence 2-5 words)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

<b>Decorations: Use a different one in each paragraph:</b>	I	II	III	IV	V	IV	V
Question, 3sss, simile/metaphor, quotation, alliteration, DRAMATIC OPENING/CLOSING	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

<b>Triple Extensions: use 1 style per paragraph; each paragraph with a different style</b>	I	II	III	IV	V	IV	V
word rep., phrase&clausal rep., repeating "ings", repeating -ly's, repeating adj./nouns, repeating verbs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

## EXAMPLE OF A DIVISION ESSAY

### The Western: More Than Just "Popular" Literature By Roger Bauer (College Student)

Works of popular fiction—detective stories, Gothic novels, and Westerns, for example—are usually not regarded very highly by literary critics. This evaluation is justified in many cases. All too often in popular fiction characters are familiar stereotypes, plot devices are predictable and sometimes improbable, settings are overly familiar or only vaguely described, and themes are simplistic or undeveloped. To some extent, these characteristics apply to fiction of the American West, not only to contemporary Westerns, but also to those novels and stories that have achieved status as classics. Still, although clichéd characters and trite plots dominate even classic Westerns, a strong sense of place and timeless themes give the Western the power to transcend the "popular fiction" category.

Readers encounter familiar characters in novels and short stories with Western settings. The cast of characters is likely to include at least a few of the following: the cowboy, the dance hall girl, the sheriff, the deputy, the madam, the miner, the schoolmarm, the easterner, the gambler, the rancher, the hired hand, the merchant, the preacher, the traveling salesman, and assorted cavalry soldiers, cattle rustlers, Indians, and Mexicans. These people are seldom fully developed: rather, they are stock characters who play exactly the roles readers expect them to play. Some classic stories, such as "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" and "Stage to Lordsburg," gather an assortment of these characters together in an isolated setting, playing them off against one another in a way that emphasizes their status as types rather than as individuals.

The plot elements are just as predictable. Often, a gang terrorizes innocent settlers or ranchers or townspeople, as in Shane; just as often, a desperado is on the loose, as in "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky." Other common elements are a showdown on a dusty street, as in "The Tin Star," or an ambush, as in "Stage to Lordsburg." Scenes of chase and capture are staples from James Fenimore Cooper to Louis L'Amour, and standard boy-meets-girl plots can be traced from The Virginian to current popular novels.

But the Western has the potential to transcend the limits of these familiar materials. A particular strength is its geographical setting, which includes an unusually varied landscape and some magnificent scenery. The setting in Western fiction is special for a variety of reasons. First, the West is beautiful and exotic. Second, the West is huge: towns are widely separated, and characters travel great distances. As a result, a sense of loneliness and isolation pervades the Western. Third, the West is frightening and unpredictable, characterized by untamed landscapes, wild animals, and terrifying extremes of weather. The harshness and unpredictability of the climate are especially frightening to newcomers to the West and to readers. Still, the very extreme conditions such as tornadoes, blizzards, and desert sun, as well as unfamiliar topography of mesas, plains, and canyons that are so disturbing are also fascinating. Ultimately, the setting can be friend or enemy: Zane Grey's Riders of the Purple Sage ends with its lovers isolated in a canyon by a rock slide; in Max Brand's "Wine on the Desert," a man dies of thirst in the hostile sun. In these and other Western stories, the setting is a powerful presence that is always strongly

felt.

Perhaps even more powerful than the setting are the themes of the Western—themes found in all great literature. Each of these themes adds interest to the Western, giving it substance and stature. One such theme is the classic conflict between East and West, civilization and the wilderness, illustrated in novels as diverse as Cooper's The Prairie and Wister's The Virginian. In The Virginian, as in Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," it is the woman who is the symbol of civilization. Typically, the East is portrayed as rigid, sterile, and limiting, while the West is natural and spontaneous, untamed and beautiful. Another classic theme frequently seen in Western literature is the initiation theme. Here a young man or a boy, or occasionally, a girl, is initiated into the mysteries of adulthood through participation in a physical test of his courage, for example, a fistfight, a gun battle, or a feat of strength. This theme is developed in "The Tin Star" as well as in the 1952 film High Noon. A third theme frequently explored in Western fiction is the journey or search. The vast spaces and dangerous climate and topography of the West make it an ideal setting for this theme. In works as diverse as Charles Portis's True Grit, Louis L'Amour's Down the Long Hills, and the classic John Ford film The Searchers, the journey figures prominently. Whether the quest is for a long-lost relative, for land or gold or silver, or for knowledge or experience, the search theme dominates many works of Western literature, particularly longer works.

Balancing the familiar plot elements and stereotypical characters of Western fiction are two other elements. setting and theme, that set it apart from other kinds of popular fiction. In addition to its vivid settings and universal themes, the Western also boasts a strong sense of history and an identity as a uniquely American genre. These two qualities should give it a lasting importance consistent with its continuing popularity.

## EXAMPLE OF A PROCESS ESSAY

### Leading the Way By Grant Kimbrell

What is the most important part of youth ministry to a teen when it comes to visiting a new church? Explaining that fun activities are only a minor part of teens enjoying a youth group, a 2001 study showed that youth do not view this as an essential factor. A minute percent declared that the most important part was having a "fast paced high tech entertaining ministry approach" The greatest number of people stated that "a welcoming atmosphere where you can be yourself" is what teens look for when visiting a new church. If that is what teens look for in a youth group, it is important for churches to intentionally practice showing acceptance and kindness to new youth.

In order to accomplish a goal, it is essential to prepare. There is no room for thinking about oneself when meeting new people. Although teens are often preoccupied with thoughts about themselves, they should be trained to consider others. As stated in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Therefore, the first step in the Preparation stage is for youth to put themselves in the place of visitors by empathizing with those entering an unknown environment. Prepared, everyone must take the initiative of even waiting for newcomers to darken the doorway of the church. On Sunday, I loiter in the lobby, looking for newcomers to warmly greet them when they arrive. The whole youth group should prepare to take part in this most important function of the church.

Enthusiastically welcoming people is the second stage of gaining members. To greet newcomers, first approach with a smile while making eye contact. Second, shake hands while introducing oneself. Then ask their names. After accomplishing this, invite them to Sunday School after the service. That way, they will feel more welcome and loosen up a bit. While doing this, start a conversation. Find out which school they attend and their ages and grades. Chatting casually, inquire about their extracurricular and free time activities. This will greatly facilitate getting to know them so they can be matched up with others in the youth group who share the same interests. Be sure to act relaxed instead of anxious, or else the conversation will seem like an interrogation! Without welcoming and showing personal interest in visitors, it is rare for people to enjoy their visit or return.

Next comes enfoldng them into the youth group. To begin with, introduce them to others, and subsequently, invite them into the life of the group. When conversing with them, for instance, it might arise that one of them is a soccer player. If so, introduce him to another soccer player. Lacking a common interest with others in the group, introduce them to your own best friends and just spend some time with them. Absolutely never walk off and leave a newcomer stranded! As time goes on, invite them to join you at a church dinner or to sit with you in church. Ask for their telephone numbers and call them to invite them to youth events. After all this, they will feel a part of the church.

Thinking about themselves, teens often do not worry about other newcomers, but when we do not think about ourselves, we can put our heart and soul into ministry. The church relies on the

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young people to bring in other youth. When growing, the church needs people to lead it in the future. Ministering to newcomers is a great way to prepare to lead.